**Forgiveness Lunch**
An evening of original dance by Blake Nellis

**Mortar**

**Performed by:**
Taylor Berg ‘16
Kajsa Jones ‘16
Catherine Lewis ‘15
Jesus Lucero ‘16
Sara Maronde ‘15
Travis Nietert ‘15
Becca Rye ‘16
Jennifer Schmidt ‘15
Abby Suhr ‘18

**Understudied by:**
Kelly Dawson ‘17
Ben King Quale ‘15
Bitta Gordon ‘17

**Conceived & Choreographed by:** Blake Nellis ‘07
**Music composed, performed & recorded by:** Justin Nellis ‘10

A special thanks to James Sewell Ballet for commissioning Mortar in February of 2014. Mortar was created as part of the James Sewell Ballet Works Project, supported by the Jerome Foundation, with the help of MN taxpayers & the MN State Arts Board.
Dark Mountain Manifesto

Performed by:
Blake Nellis '07

With music by: Radiohead, Hans Streibner, Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson, Emancipator, Noah Gundersen, José González & Robert Schumann

I wanna hunt like David,
I wanna to kill me a giant man,
I wanna slay my demons,
But I got lots of them, I got lots of them
- David, by Noah Gundersen

Crew:
Stage Manager: Sarah Brandt ‘15
Light Board: Shannon Moser ’16
Sound Board: Katherine Bergman ’16
Backstage Crew: Laura Thoms ’15
Hair/Makeup: Becca Chapin ’15

Set Design by: Tom Berger
Light Design by: Tom Berger
Costume Conception by: Blake Nellis '07
Costume Design by: Lisa Lantz
Costume Construction by: Jessica O'Brien '15, Grace Trimble '08, & Luther College Costume Shop

Headshots by: Evan Sowder '15 - evansowder.com
Poster Design by: Carly Ellefsen '15
Taylor Berg - Junior - Biology/Dance
I'd like to thank my family, my friends, and my fiancé for always supporting me.

Kelly Dawson - Sophomore - Dance/Biology
I would like to thank Blake for the opportunity to watch this performance grow. I would also like to thank my friends and family for supporting me throughout this hectic time of rehearsals and the start of a new semester.

Bitta Gordon - Sophomore - Dance/Management
I would like to thank Blake Nellis for this wonderful opportunity to work so closely with a number of very talented individuals, and my friends and family for being so supportive and patient with me during this hectic time full of rehearsals and the chaos of a new semester.

Kajsa Jones - Junior - Management
"I have a powerful urge to communicate with you, but I find the distance barrier between us insurmountable" - Pat C. Hoy, IL
Big thanks and love to all the ones who brave the distance.

Catherine Lewis - Junior - Psychology/Dance
Thank you to the cast and crew - I'm grateful we are exploring these parts of the human condition together.

Jesus Lucero - Junior - Psychology/Dance
Petals slowly turning, stretching to the sky, together, stirring, churning time just floating by. Seeking some connection, a way to understand grasping, gasping, attaching, bricks in either hand. Victorious the victor I stand but proud, alone, forgiveness inward here I am grown.
Sarah Maronde - Senior - Biology; Psychology/Dance
Complete immersion in movement is a gift to be shared. Thank you Blake, cast, crew, friends and family for sharing.

Travis Nietert - Senior - Biology; Dance
Combining these two disciplines has allowed for everyday to be a journey into the exploration of self, others and the environment around me. Thank you for coming and enjoy the show. Xoxo

Ben King Quale - Senior - Music
Moving is fairly new to me, and the aesthetic is different than any other experience I've ever had.

Becca Rye - Sophomore - Accounting/Management
"We must embrace pain and burn it as fuel for our journey."
- Kenji Miyazawa

Jennifer Schmidt - Senior - Dance
Watching and dancing this piece reminds me why I move and create. Thanks for the inspiration. I am grateful to gather with you all around the campfire.

Abby Suhr - Freshman - Dance/Psychology
Shout out to God, for letting me do all of this and a special thanks to my family for teaching me to always do what makes me feel alive.
About The Work:

*Mortar* was inspired by a few spare bricks Leah & I found in our new backyard during the summer of 2013. I remember finding old stones or bricks as a kid, and building with them on long summer evenings. I loved to jump from brick to stone imagining everything else was lava. One thing lead to another, and I began thinking about the word “mortar” and all its meanings: 1) a sturdy vessel in which material is pounded or rubbed with a pestle 2) a muzzle-loading cannon (commonly used during the Vietnam War) 3) The square academic cap, graduate cap, or mortarboard (because of its similarity in appearance to the hawk used by bricklayers to hold mortar 4) National honor society recognizing college seniors for their achievements in scholarship, leadership, and service 5) a mixture of cement or lime with sand and water, used between bricks or stones to bind them together in building, or as plaster / Then my dear friend Jim said, as only Jim can, something like “Mortar is the true double edged sword. On the one hand it keeps the bricks bound together, on the other...it keeps them from ever truly touching one another.” And so the piece with the bricks was born.

It’s rare at Luther to re-set a dance piece that’s been previously made, but this cast was up to the challenge. We began rehearsals for Mortar just two weeks ago. And here we are, ready to welcome you in, build a home and tear it down.

When I came up with the title *Forgiveness Lunch* last summer, I knew I would be dancing in this work. After all, it’s my memory of sitting across from my dad in that strange “cafeteria” nibbling on Peanut M&M’s. And this is part of my process, my attempt to forgive, my struggle with it, my forgiving and then feeling guilty for not forgiving enough...or for not forgiving myself...In *Dark Mountain Manifesto*, I explore the evolution of this forgiveness and the way it lives in my physical body. It is a new work, a beginning, a struggle for me to dance about something that has felt secret far too long.
Special Thanks and Inspirations:

-- To this cast of movement artists, for listening, being brave and helping me talk about the act of forgiveness.
-- To my mom, I am who I am because of you. I love you more than ice cream!
-- To my dad, whom so much of this piece is about...I’m still forgiving you. Please be patient with me.
-- To Justin Nellis, for giving me a piece of music that dances like I do in my dreams. I love you, brother.
-- To all the Visual & Performing Arts faculty & staff, for supporting this intermedia art form and challenging smart, compassionate students every day.
-- To Kathy Reed, for finding the ending to *Dark Mountain Manifesto* and always coming to support my work.
-- To Jessica O'Brien, for bringing these costumes to life & going far beyond what is asked.
-- To Grace Trimble, for jumping in and managing the ever-important costume shop (which is so much more than just a costume shop).
-- To Sarah Brandt, for doing all the little things that matter a lot.
-- To Tom Berger, for making that brick wall & being a creative problem solver.
-- To Luther College & the Lecture & Fine Arts Grant funding which allowed Maggie Schneider to be on campus during January & Leah Gallas to here in February. I could not have made this piece without them.
-- To Leah Gallas, for helping create *Mortar* last year, set *Mortar* this year and being the mortar that keeps us going strong (for many more years!). You continue to inspire me, as always, I love you (We’re getting married!!)
-- To my beard.

*This piece is for all the times we’ve tried to forgive & have failed.*

*Here’s to trying again.*
The Experience of Viewing Art:

Look for what you desire. Remember what you’re attracted to. Trust that through movement, emotion and human connection, these performers will do more than demonstrate virtuosic dance or narrate stories from the past; they will invite you into their world, our world, beneath the layers that keep us apart. Honor your fears. Appreciate the unknown. Know that “getting it” is not a fixed point. "Understanding" is a not a zero sum (A+B doesn’t have to = C).

*Experiencing art is fluid.* Memories are fractal and composed, not recorded. This narrative is non-linear, partially fictitious, partially *yours!* Watching us move can be like studying a waterfall. There is no right or wrong. We are creating beauty with both hemispheres of the brain. *We are artists.* And we are dancing in part because we cannot speak to what this is. Thank you for being here.

- *Blake Nellis, Visiting Teacher in Dance at Luther College*

Well the way I feel is the way I write
It isn't like the thoughts of the man who lies
There is a truth and it's on our side
    Dawn is coming
    Open your eyes
Look into the sun as the new days rise
- *Stay Alive, by José González*
UPCOMING PRODUCTIONS

Body of Water: A Performance Merging Science & the Arts
Conceived and choreographed by Jane Hawley and students
Directed by Jane Hawley
Center for the Arts: Jewel Theatre
March 5 at 9:30pm
March 6 at 7:30pm
March 7 at 1:30pm and 7:30pm

Senior Projects: Class of 2015
Storre Theatre
April 10 at 7:30pm
April 12 at 1:30pm

Metamorphoses by Mary Zimmerman
Directed by Bobby Vrtis
Center for the Arts: Jewel Theatre
May 1 at 7:30pm
May 2 at 1:30pm and 7:30pm
May 7 at 7:30pm
May 8 at 9:30pm
May 9 at 1:30pm and 7:30pm